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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/699,611	10/31/2003	Marc J. Stepkowski	151P11201US01	9934
54228	7590	11/14/2006	EXAMINER	
IPLM GROUP, P.A. POST OFFICE BOX 18455 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55418				KOHARSKI, CHRISTOPHER
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3763				

DATE MAILED: 11/14/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/699,611	STEPKOWSKI ET AL.
	Examiner Christopher D. Koharski	Art Unit 3763

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 October 2006.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-7 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 8-17 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 9 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/2/04.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election with traverse of the election of Group II in the reply filed on 10/13/2006 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that despite the distinct and patentable subject matter present between groups II and I, the claims should be examined together nevertheless. This is not found persuasive because the examination poses a burdensome search by divergent classifications and dissimilar method/apparatus steps. However, if a generic allowable apparatus claim is reached during prosecution, Applicant can represent method claims incorporating that allowable generic subject matter.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claims 1-7 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected group (group II elected), there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in the reply filed on 10/13/2006.

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement (IDS) that was submitted on 02/04/2004 is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the examiner is considering the information disclosure statement.

Claim Objections

Claim 9 is objected to because of the following informalities: Regarding claim 9, there is a lack on antecedent basis for “..said hole...”. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

Claims 8, 10-11, 13 and 15-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by McGuckin, JR. et al. (20002/0107506). McGuckin, JR. et al. discloses a dialysis catheter.

Regarding claims 8, 10-11, 13 and 15-16, McGuckin, JR. et al. discloses an extensible catheter (10) and an elongate rod (80, 90) having a distal end (82, 92) adapted to be inserted into the distal end of the catheter with a second attachment (81, 91) wherein a fixed distance is selected so that catheter diameter is reduced from a relaxed state to a fixed state (Figures 3-4B, 11-12, [0140-0145]). The attached element of the elongated rod and the catheter comprises a threaded luer lock and cap (15, 81, 91) that comprise female and male interconnections.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claim 9 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over McGuckin, JR. et al. McGuckin, JR. et al. meets the claim limitations as described above except for the specific recitation of the incision size during insertion of the catheter.

Regarding claims 9 and 14, McGuckin, JR. et al. teaches that the catheter size and shape can be dimensioned to enable better tracking through different body elements ([0140-0145]) and therefore if not inherent it would have been obvious to include tracking through the incision hole since it is well known in the art that changing a catheter's size and shape characteristics allows for easier use and maneuvering through a patient (see also Seward et al. (6,872,433)).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 12 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over McGuckin, JR. et al.

Regarding claims 12 and 17, McGuckin, JR. et al. discloses the claimed invention except for the stretched distance relaxation state. If not inherent, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate this material characteristic of the catheter (see also Seward et al. (6,872,433)), since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960).

Additionally, if not inherent, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to the characteristic to distance change to allow for controlled patient entry, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233 (CCPA 1955).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher D. Koharski whose telephone number is 571-272-7230. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30am to 4:00pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nick Lucchesi can be reached on 571-272-4977. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Date: 10/31/06

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